

REMARKS

The Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 18, 2005. Claims 21, 23 to 27, 51, 53 to 57 and 64 are in the application, of which Claims 21, 51 and 64 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

By the Office Action, Claims 21, 23 to 27, 51, 53 to 57 and 64<sup>1</sup> are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,009,439 (Shiomi) and U.S. Patent No. 6,490,683 (Yamada). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested, as detailed more fully below.

The present invention concerns data processing involving data files belonging to a directory, each of data files has both data and meta-data indicating characteristics of the data. Multiple kinds of meta-data are read from the data files, and a common meta-data item whose content is included in all of the data files is extracted from the multiple kinds of meta-data read from the data files. Directory meta-data is generated for the directory using the common meta-data extracted from the multiple kinds of meta-data read from the data files, and the directory meta-data is attached to the directory.

The Office Action indicates that Shiomi, and in particular col. 7, lines 24 to 28, discloses the feature of extracting a common meta-data item whose content is included in all of the data files from multiple kinds of meta-data read from data files.

However, the cited portion of Shiomi is merely seen to describe grouping pieces of data based on values of a selected attribute. Shiomi is seen to describe a piece of

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<sup>1</sup> Although, at page 2, the Office Action lists Claims 21, 23 to 26, 51 to 56 and 64, it is assumed that the intention was to list the claims currently pending. If this is not the intention, however, further clarification is respectfully requested.

data having a plurality of attributes arranged in a hierarchy, with each of the attributes having an attribute value, extracting a value of a selected attribute for each of the data pieces, and then classifying the extracted values into groups so that each piece of data in a given group includes a common attribute value. Thus, Shiomi is merely seen to extract attribute values for a selected attribute and then to classify, or group, the attribute values.

Shiomi is not seen to read multiple kinds of meta-data from data files belonging to a directory, with each of the data files having both data and meta-data, extracting a common meta-data whose content is included in all of the data files, and generating, and attaching to the directory, directory meta-data for the directory using the common meta-data item.

The Office Action concedes that Shiomi fails to disclose attaching to a directory, from which meta-data of data files belonging to the directory is read, meta-data generated as recited in Claim 21. Thus, the Office Action seems to concede that Shiomi fails to disclose attaching directory meta-data generated for the directory using common meta-data item whose content is included in all of the data files belonging to the directory, the common meta-data item being extracted from the multiple kinds of meta-data read from the directory's data files.

Yamada has been reviewed and in Applicants' opinion is not seen to remedy the above-noted deficiencies noted with respect to Shiomi.

The Office Action cites col. 22, lines 62 to 67 as disclosing attaching directory meta-data. While Yamada is seen to describe using directories to group file data, and attaching a directory name to each directory, nothing in Yamada, and particularly the cited portion of Yamada, is seen to disclose attaching to a directory, from which meta-data

of data files belonging to the directory is read, directory meta-data, which is generated for the directory using common meta-data item whose content is included in all of the data files belonging to the directory, the common meta-data item being extracted from the multiple kinds of meta-data read from the directory's data files.

Therefore, for at least the foregoing reasons, Claim 21 is believed to be in condition for allowance. Further, Applicants submit that Claims 51 and 64 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

The other claims are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

#### REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW

Although the Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance, if upon consideration of this Response To Office Action the Examiner still has concerns as to the patentability of the claims, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact Applicants' representative to arrange an interview in order to further advance prosecution of the subject application.

CONCLUSION

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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